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People of England

IN THEIR

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Present Circumstances

C O N S I D E R E D ;

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How far they are, or are not Obliged

BY THE

Oath of Allegiance.

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L O N D O N :

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THE
 CASE
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 . CONSIDERED, &c.

KING *James*, rightful Heir of the Crown, by the death of his Brother, enters into the full possession, has all the Rights, Dues, and Prerogatives of a King of *England*, and all his Subjects are bound to him by their Oaths of Allegiance. He selects and chooses out of his Subjects as many as he pleases. He forms them into a regular Army, maintains them, trusts, and depends upon them to preserve and secure to himself all his Rights, and Interests. The rest of his Subjects neither He, nor the Laws of the Land permit to take up Arms to oppose his Enemies without his Commission: And some of them freely offering themselves to raise Forces in his Service,

and for his Defence, he rejects, and will not Commission them, commands them to go home to live quietly there, and leave Him to conduct, and manage his own Affairs, and Interests.

He gives Just cause of War to a Neighbor Prince, by invading his Rights, by an Action generally presumed, and believed by all his Subjects, or at least by nine parts of ten of them, most base, against the Laws of Nature, Nations, and of this Land, against his own Crown, and Dignity, and against the plain, and most manifest interest of his Nobility and Commonalty, or the main Body of his People; and that on purpose to subvert the Laws, the Rights, the Religion of All, one only Party, or Faction excepted; and thereby to give that Party power to ruine, and destroy all the rest; which too is a Party laid aside by Law, and declared, and made in all possible ways incapable of being *trusted in the Government*, or of such Offices as He by virtue of *his Regal Power* is to execute by Ministers; and that because the designs, and interests of that Party have been found by the experience of *four preceding Reign's* to have been contrariant to the Crown and Dignity of the Kings of *England*, and against the plain Interest, and Rights of the People.

In this state of Affairs, the injured Neighbor Prince invades this Land, Declares that He is wronged, and desires that Justice may be done him: K. *James* calls together his Army, and goes out to oppose; and to Fight him: The Foreign Prince offers to refer the decision, and ultimate determination of the Controversie to K. *James's* own Subjects in a Regular Lawful Parliament assembled, and desires that such a one might be Called. K. *James* will not do it, but trusts to his Soldiers, and will not trust to the Body of his People who only can speak their sense Legally in Parliament.

He is deserted of his Soldiers, They will not Fight against, but joyn themselves to the Foreign Prince, perhaps Judging in their private opinions his Cause right, and just. Upon this, K. *James* makes his Escape, flies to the Old Enemy of the
English

Nation, one who desires nothing more than to destroy, and raine the People; to change and subvert their Laws, and Religion; and by this desertion, and Flight leaves his own Lige People in the hands, under the Power, and so the disposal of that Foreign Prince.

In this State of Affairs it is matter of Consideration, What particular persons, who are under Oaths of Allegiance to *K. James*, by Vertue of those Oaths are bound to do.

I. Here it is plain, that they are not bound to take up Arms and oppose that Prince under whose power they were, when *K. James* left them. Because they are bound by the Law not to take up Arms, or raise Forces either for any Friend, or against any Enemy of the Kings, without his Commission; They have no Commission, and so cannot be bound to do this; for no man can be bound by a Legal Oath to do that for which the Law condemns them as highly Criminal, and adjudges them to the Gallows for so doing.

II. They are not bound to leave their Houses, and Families, and follow *K. James*, and tender him their Services, because they are not assured that He is able to maintain them, or willing to receive them; inasmuch as, in their absence another Invader may come, and seize upon the Country, and destroy their Families, and make their condition deplorable. And that must be presumed to be as much against *K. James's* mind, as against their own. Besides, He is now in the power of the Old Enemy of the Kings and People of *England*. And if great Numbers of the English should go to *K. James* in *France*, the French King may be jealous of their designs, and take opportunity to destroy them; at best He may use them as well to fight His quarrells as *K. James's*; as well against him, as for him. Besides, it is notorious that He neither will, nor dares trust any Number of Armed Protestants to be in his Country, for so small a time as is necessary to fit them for any publick Service.

III. They are not bound by their Oaths of Allegiance to continue in the same state wherein *K. James* left them. For
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at that time there was no Government, no Justice, no Oath of Law: They were no longer a People, but a confused multitude, every one did what he pleased, none could command, and none could obey; But the *Mob*, the Scum and Rabble of the Nation ruled All; (as *K. James* himself found by Lamentable experience:) Now the Oath of Allegiance cannot oblige Men to continue in this State, because it was made on purpose to keep Men from such a State, to secure Government, to support Justice, and provide for the Execution of Law; for this end the King requires it to be taken, and to this end every single Man upon occasion takes it.

IV. As they are not bound to continue in that State, so they are not bound nor to endeavour a deliverance from it, or to refuse the most likely, and perhaps the onely possible way to get out of it; because they are bound to seek their own preservation, and do what in each Mans power lies, to secure the Common good of the Nation. If *K. James* by his own default, and ill conduct, gives occasion for an Invasion, and cannot oppose the force of the Invader, but runs away, and shifts for himself, and provides for his own safety, and so leaves his People, under the power of, and at the mercy of the Invader, and in such a condition that they cannot lawfully fight against him, nor with reason fly from him, and whilst they remain at home, they have neither Government, nor Justice, nor benefit of Law, but are obnoxious to the rage and fury of every Villain, and Cut-throat; in this Case, They cannot be bound by the Oath of Allegiance from complying with present necessities, and using all for possible means of their own preservation at home, as well as the King provides for his, by flying abroad.

V. Since the taking of an Oath is a Voluntary act, which a Man may do or leave undone, the obligation of it can never be supposed to reach to things that neither are, nor can be, in his power. If a Man swears to do any thing that is in it self absurd, against nature, or impossible, he sins in making a rash Oath, but is under no obligation of performance. We cannot

by

an Oath, oblige our selves never to eat, or drink, or sleep, because we are oblig'd to do these things by Nature; and by the same Nature we are oblig'd to seek for protection from Wrong, and Injury, to be safeguarded in Life and Limb, and to be defended in our just and true Rights. These things are under the direction of Nature, and are so laid upon us by the original Frame and Make of our beings, that subsequent injunctions of Will to the contrary are void, and null; because they are Violations of Nature, absurd in themselves, and morally impossible.

VI. From hence now follows one thing to be observed, that as we cannot oblige our selves totally to omit these, so we cannot oblige our selves to suspend the doing of those, at the Will and Pleasure of another, so as to bind our selves not to do them, till we receive the Allowance and actual Consent of another; because that other may be so far distant from us that we cannot know his Pleasure, or receive his Allowance at such times when the demands of Nature are most extremely pressing upon us. We sleep sometimes whether we will or no; at other times we cannot sleep; though our Wills are most desirous of it. When a Blow is coming toward the Head, we lift up our Arms to fend it off from that principal Part without any perceptible act of the Will. Now if our own Wills have so little Command over us in such Acts as these, they cannot oblige us to suspend the doing of them at the Will of another. It is to be observed further, that the Obligation to seek for Protection, to be safeguarded and defended, is most closely laid upon us, and more pressing than any of the other, because our Wills in this Case have no power over us, we must and cannot but will it, and that at every moment of time: We may oblige our selves not to eat, or drink, or sleep for a certain space of time, wherein we can reasonably judge that the Necessities of Nature will not overbear us, and be too prevalent to be resisted by us. But we cannot oblige our selves not to endeavour Security, and to be safeguarded for any Period of time, because we cannot know whether Extremity, or the most urgent Want may not require it the very next moment.

VII. Seeing

VII. Seeing we are obliged by Nature to desire to be safeguarded, and protected from Wrong and Violence, and no Act of our Will can oblige us not to endeavour after it for a certain Period of time; it must follow from thence, that if there be any words in the Oath of Allegiance, which may seem to speak, that particular Persons have thereby bound themselves to K. James; to be his Lieges, at his disposal, without regard to their own Protection, whether He protect them or no: and although by his own default he puts himself out of a Capacity of protecting them, so that they cannot see how or when He can be able to protect, and safeguard them; (as suppose He provokes a Neighbour-Prince to War against him, and is vanquished and runs away, and leaves them to the Mercy of such a Stranger, yet they will continue his Lieges at his disposal, without any Regards for, or expectations of Protection from him, whether He ever be able to protect them or no.) All such words as seem to speak such a Stipulation, must not be interpreted to that purpose; because it never was in their Power to contract upon such terms, inasmuch as they are bound by Nature antecedently to any Act of their Wills, to provide for Safety and Defence against Wrong and Violence.

VIII. If they are not bound to continue Lieges to K. James; and at his disposal, whether he does, or can, or is likely to give them Protection; then they are not bound not to contract, and enter into a new Stipulation with another to become his Lieges in case He be able and willing to protect them. For seeing the Oath of Allegiance can reach no farther than Allegiance, or Ligeancy it self does; when Allegiance is no longer due, we are no longer under the Obligation of that Oath. Now Allegiance being nothing else but according to the known Definition *Vinculum*

V. Spelmanni Glossar. Verb. Ligeantia: dicuntur igitur utriq; *Ligii*; Princeps nempe *Ligius* Dominus: Subditi vero populus *Ligius* & homines *Liges*. Ibid pag. 448. Edit. 1626.

arctius inter Subditum & Regem, utroq; invicem connectens; hunc ad Protectionem & justum regimen, illos ad tributum & debitam subjectionem: that is, a close Bond between a King and a Subject obliging

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the one to give Protection, and the other to pay due Subjection: If a King breaks away from his People, and makes himself unable to give them Protection, the Bond that tyed them together is thereby broken, and they are no longer Lieges but at liberty to get Protection, where they can find it.

The only Objection against this, is, that possibly a People may contract with one to the detriment of another, perhaps with an Usurper, passing by the Heir who has a true, though depending Right. In Answer to which, it must be said, that the Heir's Right ought to be preserved, and his Protection is first to be sought, if he be able and willing to do it; But if he be neither able, nor willing, or if he be only not willing, the People must not be bereft of their Protection, and want Government and Justice, because a certain Man has no Will that they should have it. But in Case he be willing, he must openly demand it, and put in his claim for it, or some in his behalf, because the necessities of Government and Protection are so pressing, that particular Persons cannot remain long without it. And then it must be clear, and manifest that he is the Heir. If there be any doubt of his Title, he must make it out to full Satisfaction.

IX. If they can contract with another, they may do it as to become their King, or as Regent; for if they be no longer Lieges, they are free to bind themselves either faster or looser, by Oath, or by Promise, either to a King or Regent. For if the Power be once in him, he is King whether he has the Name or no; and he that has not the Regal Power, is not King. It is a Complement not to give the Title to another, but no Duty; it is expediency and the good of the Community that only can give a Rule in that point: For it is not the Name nor yet the descending Title from Ancestors that gives the true Value and Estimate of a King; for the Name is equivocal, and in several Countries signifies a very different state of Power, and the descending Title comes to him, just as other Titles to Estates come to other Men. That which gives him his true Value is Government, or that which knits him to his People, and his Peo-

ple to him, so that they become one Body united together, He as Head, they as Members; He influencing and directing, they under Managery and Disposol, and all this according to the Make and Frame of that particular Body, whereof He is the Head. Thus a King as Head, is in value answerable to the whole Body, because all the Parts in their activities receive Influence and Direction from him. It is the Head that sees dangers and advantages; and accordingly gives order to the Foot to move forward or backward; without such Notices and Influences the whole cannot be preserved, each part must lose its Activities, and all the Advantages it hath in the present State of being. Upon this account it is, that the Arm puts up it self, to suffer, to bear, to receive the impending blow, which was designed against the Head, because by the Preservation of that, the whole is secured. Thus a King as Head, influencing the whole, is in value as great as all the People. But if we put the Case either in Body natural, or Body politick; that all influences from the Head are intercepted, and no direction comes to the Members from it, then each part begins to have a value of its own, which may be as much or greater than that of the Head; for it is the usefulness that gives the true value to the Head; for whilst all the Senses are with it, and all the Nerves and Muscles are under the Managery of it, if these be directed according to their natural Activities, infinite are the Benefits that come from the government of the Head. But if the natural Head could be capable of taking a froward *Capitulum* against the Body, and would not permit the Eyes to be open, or the Ears to hear, or the Mouth to receive in nourishment, or the Nerves to move the parts, or would contrive to do these things not in the ways and methods of Nature, but by appointments of its own; as suppose it should cut off the joints of the Fingers and Toes, of the Arms, Legs and Thighs; and fasten them again with Wires, instead of Nerves; in this Case the Head could not effectually influence those parts as formerly, nor could they be alike plyant to the directions of the

Head, and so the Head would be less useful to the whole, and consequently of less value in it self. Now perhaps such a *Case* never entred into a Head natural, but politick Heads have often acted in similar ways to it; They have slighted the proper Conveyances, whereby, according to the Frame of established Governments, the effects of their Power should descend down to the People, and set up new ways and methods of their own Contrivance, and have taken upon them to rule by Will and Humor and Project, without and against the Laws of the established Government, and it may be against their own Oaths, whereby they have nulled the mutual Trusts that should be between King and People, and broken the Bonds that naturally unite one to the other, whereby they become one Body politick, and so they have made themselves useles to the People, and the People to them. In such a Case whatever the Title is, yet the true value of the King necessarily decreases, and he becomes not answerable in value to the whole People. But if there happens to be a Separation of one from the other, either by Death, or manifest Abrenunciation, or Abdication, or plenary Dereliction; or if it be a subitary Dereliction: but such a one as leaves the People bereft of Law and Justice, without Provisions for their Security, and without sufficient Ground of hope that upon his return he will lay aside his mischievous Project of governing according to Pleasure, but will let the Influences of Regal Power descend to the People in the regular and avowed ways which the Laws of the established Government require. In these Cases as the People are without a King, so they must have another in his stead who must be substituted in the same way that the other was instituted; that is, by creating mutual Trusts in one another, which only can effectually and solemnly be done, by giving and taking mutual Oaths to and from one another.

X. If they can contract with another so as to become his People, and he their King, they may then take Oaths to Him. For if the Oaths which *K. James* took to them, and they to him

him, did not inseparably joyn them together so that he must as long as he lives remain their King, and they his People; inasmuch as notwithstanding those Oaths he may, if he will, renounce, and abdicate, and entirely desert the Government; and upon such Renunciation, Abdication, and plenary Desertion, they no longer are or can be his People. From hence it must follow that in certain Cases there may be a separation of King from People, and so of People from King, notwithstanding their Oaths mutually taken and given to one another; and then the People must be at Liberty to become Subjects to another, and by new Oaths to secure Him of their Fidelity, without which they can never become a People, or Body Politick. Therefore in such a Case they may take new Oaths, and the present circumstances of our Affairs will make such a Case, if the premises be true.

All this is true, but yet some will not allow it, because they are under an opinion, that the Subjects are tyed faster by their Oaths to the King, than the King is by his to them, and consequently they think that if a King should imprudently or rashly desert his People, yet He may at pleasure reassume the Government over them, and require them to return to their obedience, and the duty of Subjects; because he had a Title to the Regal power, and an Estate cannot be forfeited by a Mistake, or act of Imprudence.

Now this Opinion is altogether groundless, it has no foundation from the nature of Oaths, and is contrary to the nature of Truth; and whereas all the high Perogatives of Kings suppose the good of the Community, this without reason deprives it of all possible means of Safety.

XI. They ought to take the Oaths, because thereby they will get again into a state of Government, become a People, have the benefit of Laws, be secured from Violence, and Wrong; All these they must desire and endeavour after; it is not only their Interest, but Duty to do it. And without Oaths which only can beget mutual trusts, and so create a sufficient power,
none

any of those things can be secured. And why should they
 not do it? as they love their Lives, their Liberties, their Pro-
 perties, their Religion, the publick good, and the good of the
 Community, they must be inclined to do it. For all those must
 be given over as lost, if ever K. *James* can have sufficient power
 to execute his Will. Once he manifestly and notoriously de-
 signed the Subversion of all these, and there is not the least
 argument, that he either has, or is in the least likelihood to
 change his purposes. There is nothing can stop men from act-
 ing in such a Case as this, but a clear Conviction that the thing
 to be done is sinful and wicked. Now it is hard to think,
 what Sin it can be, to make use of necessary means, at a fair
 opportunity, which is put into their hands, without their seek-
 ing to preserve their Lives, their Liberties, their Religion, the
 general good of the Community. But yet this seems to be a
 Sin because thereby K. *James* may lose his Rights, that to which
 he was born, and ought to have by the Law, from whence by
 force he is outed, and cannot recover without the assistance of
 his People. To this is answered, That if K. *James* kept to Law,
 and had been contented with the Rights which he had by Law,
 he could never have been outed; but if he stretches his power
 beyond the Law, and depends upon Force to support that power,
 he may by force lose his own, and he has none to blame but
 himself for invading the Rights of others. Law cannot help
 him, nor can he have advantage from Lawful Oaths, or Oaths
 prescribed his Subjects by Law, to require their assistance in
 his Invasions against Law. It is true, the King has Rights by
 Law, and the Subject is bound to assist him in the defence of
 those Rights, and it is true too that the Subject has Rights by
 Law, and every one of them is bound by Nature, and Reason
 according to Law to preserve their own Rights. Now if
 a King invades the Rights of his Subjects, and takes from them
 the benefit of Legal defence of those Rights, in such a Case as
 this, if they do not resist, and oppose force to force, they must
 be said to comply with the Doctrine of Passive Obedience in a
 high

high Degrée. But if in such a time a Neighbor Prince wars against this King, and outs him of his power, may not the People be willing to receive those Rights which they ought to have had by Law, or are they bound to neglect their own rights which they ought to have by Law, and endeavor to recover the Kings power of doing what he will, as well against Law, as according to Law. In this Case it is certain that men may, and will, and in reason ought to provide for themselves, because here the good of the Community is on their side, which in other Cases is involved in the King, and speaks for him: for when he acts without that, and to the detriment of that, men cannot be for him against themselves.

Therefore it must be concluded, that it is not the People, but the King that brings this mischief upon himself, and if he does lose his own by endeavoring to get more than his own, it is his own Fault, not the Peoples Sin.

Here two things are well to be weighed. First, That there is a great deal of difference between obedience to the Laws of a King, and obedience to the Will of a King; and consequently a great deal of difference between assistances to him in the one Case, and assistances to him in the other. Obedience to his Law is necessary, but obedience to his Will and Pleasure is not. It is the fault, and a Sin in Subjects, if they do not obey, and assist him in the Execution of Law; But it may be a fault, and sin to obey, and assist him in the Execution of his Will. In the one Case a man deserves to be hanged, if he does not assist, and in the other he may deserve to be hanged, if he does; where there is so high a Punishment, justly awarded to an Action, that Action cannot be a Duty; and the omission of it cannot be a Sin. Now if the present case be such, That the People of *England* have no grounds not to think that K. *James* requires their assistance to enable him to carry on his former purposes of subverting the Law, the Religion, the Rights, the Liberties of the People, and of making himself absolute Lord of all, and his People mere Slaves; in this Case they cannot be bound

bound to assist him, because they are bound by Law not to assist him; and each one that serves to those purposes does as much deserve to be hanged, as a false Judge does, who in compliance with the Kings Command against Law takes away the Lives, and Estates of the People.

Secondly, There is a great deal of difference between the assistances that are to be given to a King whilst he continues the Government, and keeps up the Course of Laws, and the Forms of Justice; and the assistances that are to be given him after Desertion, when the Government is down, and the People are left in a miserable Condition without Law and Justice, without Support and Defence. In the first case the People are bound not onely not to resist in many things that are hard and grievous; but to assist a King in the doing of many things that may be doubtful, perhaps not so well, and perhaps ill, perhaps without Law, and perhaps against Law; but such as they in their private judgments may think to be warranted by Regal Rights, or the Kings Prerogative; or perhaps they may think the King wiser than themselves, and he may design the publick Good, though he stretches somewhat beyond his Power. Now in these Cases many things may be done amiss, yet the keeping up of Government, and the continuance of the Forms of Law and Justice, are so much for the good of the Community, that it may be accounted a Compensation for those Ills; and at least excuse, if not require such Assistances.

But if a Government be broken up, and the People by the withdrawing of the King are left without any Provisions for Law and Justice, destitute of all Helps and Supports for their defence against Wrong and Violence; in this Case if their former King require their Assistances, they are free to consider, and they are bound to understand, upon what account they are to give it. For if He should design to use their Assistance to ill purposes, to kill or rob the People, to deprive them of their Estates, to subvert the Constitution of the Government, or the established *Protestant Religion*; if he should by their Help

Help inflave this Nation; bring in Popery and Arbitrary Government; they themselves are accountable to God and their Country, for all the Mischiefs that he may do by their means, and with their Assistances. Here they have nothing to plead in excuse for their Actions from the good of the Community, because that is not provided for, but they themselves are answerable for every thing they do, without, nor against Law, and they are at least as guilty Instruments of Rage and Violence, as any Minister of State can be, who in times of Peace, in compliance with a Kings Will does most unjustly kill and spoil the People.

These things well considered, it will easily appear, That it cannot be the Peoples Sin, if K. James should lose his Rights for want of their Assistance. Because in the present Circumstances they are no more obliged to assist Him, than they would have been to assist a Fellow-subject against an injurious and tyrannical Act of his, whilst he kept up Government. In that Case the good of the Community, and the great Benefit which every one receives from Government, might well oblige a calamitous Person to passive Obedience, or to be content to suffer wrongfully; and it might well oblige all others not to tumultuate or to disturb the publick Weal for the regaining of his Right. In both Cases men are obliged to Pity and Charity, but not to Assistances with Force of Arms, because the Good of the Community in both Cases are alike against such Actions. For the late K. James having left the People without provision for Law and Justice, and without Government; is now as much destitute of any Plea from thence, as the injur'd Subject ever was: and he that now acts in his behalf, has no Security that he does not act against great and important Duties; all that which he owes to his Country, his People, his Religion, his God; he is not secured but that he acts for Will, against Law; for Tyranny against Justice; for Idolatry, against Christianity; to pull down Truth, and to set up a Lye; a Cheat the
most

most impudent that ever was, which has always advanced itself by Insolence and Cruelty, without Regard to the Law of God, or Man.

He that thinks of these things may well allow himself time to consider before he undertakes to Act. And he that does so, will soon find that there is a vast difference between Passive Obedience, and Active Assistances; For tho a Man may, and is bound to suffer wrongfully for his Conscience, and for his Religion, from an ill Master, an ill Governor, or an ill King, as St. Peter intimates 1. Pet. 2. 19. yet he is not bound to assist, to fight for, to support him in the doing those ill things. S. Paul Rom. 13. requires Christians to be *Subject to the higher Powers, not to resist the power*, to look upon him who beareth the Sword as a *Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*. By those injunctions he obligeth them to Passive Obedience, not to tumultuate, not to disturb Government, but to live peaceably and quietly, whether the higher Powers were good or bad men, and that too whether they had good or bad Titles to those Powers; for that was for their own Good, and for the Good of the Community. Therefore he exhorts them further, 1. Tim. 2. 2. *to pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority*; that is, whether they be good or bad Men, whether they had good or bad Titles; for this end: *That they might lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godliness and Honesty*; that is, because this tended to their own Good, and the Good of the Community. Nero who then was the highest Power, and bore the Sword, was certainly a very bad Man; and he had no Title to the Power, for he got the possession against the Right of the true Heir, by a seasonable poisoning of Claudius his Antecessor; yet he being in Possession, the Christians are commanded to submit, and be subject, not to resist, but to pray for him. This will not be easily thought to have been required in Favour of Him, or for *his sake*, but for the reason which St. Paul gives,

that the Christians who were under his Power might lead peaceable and quiet lives, in the Profession, and Practice of their Religion, or in all Godliness and Honesty.

Thus far then, and upon this account it may be granted that Christians are obliged to be subject, not to resist, to pray for Emperors and Kings; so that we keep in mind, that all these Duties refer to them, as they are Powers, as they bear the Sword, as they are in Authority; that is, as they keep up Rule, and Order, and Government, amongst the Societies of Men. But if it should happen that any such a one, either Emperor or King, should lay aside his Power, throw away his Sword, make himself incapable of executing Wrath upon evil doers, be not in Authority, but so far out of it, that he cannot contribute toward their leading a peaceable and quiet life; if he withdraw so from Government, that he leaves the People without benefit of Law and Justice; in these Cases, there is nothing in those Texts that refer to Him, nothing that obliges the People either to passive Obedience, or any other Duty in respect of Him.

So much for the understanding the Nature of and the Obligation to Passive Obedience; it is a Duty incumbent upon Christians in certain Cases, for certain ends and purposes.

But as to Active Assistances by fighting and warring for one Pretender against another, or in behalf of a right Title to a Crown against a bad one, Scripture gives no directions, lays no duty upon Christians, but leaves them to the Laws of their several Countrys, to the Obligations they are under in Civil Societies.

Suppose that Nero at the coming of Galba, had escaped Death, and withdrawn out of the Territories of the Empire, and left the People, just as K. James did, without making any Provision for Law and Justice; would the Christians then, by Virtue of their Christianity, have been obliged to take up Arms in his behalf, to recover his Rights, and resettle him in the Power? What Text can be cited for such

Duty as this ? St. Paul blesses God that he was once delivered from the mouth of this Lyon; and must succeeding Christians after his Death and cruel Martyrdom, be obliged to offer themselves to that Mouth? must they inable him to crantch and tear in pieces as many as he pleases, and execute all the direful effects of his Rage and Fury. This is against Humanity; and cannot be a Christian Doctrine; it was certainly enough for some of them to submit, and suffer wrongfully, and perform all the Duties of a Passive Obedience, whilst others under his Government might perhaps *live peaceable and quiet lives*, or else received some Benefits of the usual Forms of Law. Whatever more than this they might have done in his behalf, had been more than their Duty, as they were Christians; and if they had prevailed for his Restoration, they must have looked upon themselves, as the Causes of all the Mischiefs and Outrages which he would have committed.

But suppose another Case a little nearer to the present Circumstances, and perhaps may hit the Thoughts of some particular Persons. What if *Dioclesian* had reassumed the Purple, and redemanded the Imperial Throne, which he had not legally and formally renounced, or abdicated: If he had done this after that time, when *Constantine* was in possession of the Power, and had declared himself a Christian, and resolved to support Christianity; I say what if he, or his Friends at that time had made their Argument, and sent abroad this Plea in his behalf? That he was once Emperor, owned and acknowledged as such, in full exercise of the Power, he had never Demised, or Abdicated, or Deserted the Government; (for so his Colleague *Maximianus Hercules* really thought, and did actually reassume, and persuaded *Dioclesian* to do the same) he had withdrawn indeed, and stept aside to his Gardens at *Salona*, to see how his Cabbages thrived; to take care that they were well ordered, so that they might live and grow, and become at length great according to his Wishes; but he is now returned, and demands his former Rights, and expects that the People should come in to his Assistance.

Here the Query is, what the Christians would and what they ought to do? And what can we think? Would they leave their *Constantine*, their dearest Friend, their Brother Christian, their *Deliverer*; the greatest Blessing that God had ever given to the Christian Name; one that freed 'em from Slavery and Misery, from the Racks and Gibbets by which other Christians had formerly suffered, and were then anew designed against them, and actually preparing for them? One who had secured to them the common Rights of Liberties and Properties, which by Law they ought to have; and which others were complotting injuriously, by Force and Violence to snatch from them? What can we think? That *Dioclesian* their Enemy, a known Persecutor, a furious Designer against themselves, their Lives, their Religion, might be able to execute all the mischievous purposes, which he or the naughty People about him might contrive? He that can think that the Christians would have done this, he must have express clear Texts to prove that this was their Duty; or else he must think that they were mere Bedlams, and Mad Men. And when he has done that, he must conclude too, that God the Father had resolved, that his Son Christ should never have a Kingdom in this World, to be sure not that which is promised to be *set upon a Hill*, unto which *all Nations might resort*; but that he had predestinated Christians not only to a Purgatory, but a Hell in this World, from whence there is no Redemption: For if they must choose Misery, when they have the greatest Appearances possible, that he by his Providence, works most effectually for their delivery, then they must be miserable without hope of Recovery.

Many more things might be added to shew that the Christians Duty and Interest go the same way in this, and such like Cases; but it belongs to the Adversary, if there be any such, to prove Christians under duty by Christs Law to give Active Assistance either to *Nero*, or *Dioclesian*, or any like them, for the recovery of their Rights after they

they have withdrawn from the Government, and left the Community without any benefit of Protection, and Defence from them. It was enough for them to be submitted unto, to be not resisted whilst they were the *powers*, and bore the Sword. And it was enough for the Christians to be under Passive Obedience all that time, and they were sufficiently exercised with it. Beyond this it is not conceivable that God would lay any farther Duty upon them. He might as well command them to put Swords into mad-mens hands, as oft as they find them disarmed; He may as well command them to hang themselves for the sport of Fools; for it is much the same thing to assist those in the regaining of lost power, who will certainly rack, hang, and gibbet them.

No publick Good, no true Right of Princes, no Interest of Religion can be forced to speak one word in this Case, tho each of them most apparently and strongly plead for the Duty of Passive Obedience.

It is not for the Publick Good to favor the Cause of force, violent, heady, bold presumptuous men, or of those that set up their own wills and humours against Law, and Justice. Whilst they are Powers, the publick Good requires that we should suffer 'em, and suffer for them.

But if they divest themselves of Power, whether with design, or by mistake, their Cause is not favorable, the Publick Good is no way concerned for them, if it be not for the avoidance of a greater Evil. If they be caught with a Why-not, who can help it? if they will go, none are bound to fetch them back, their Rights as they are Princes do not require it; and there is no Vertue, no point of Religion that does oblige men to it.

I have been long in this point on purpose to free mens thoughts from Confusion and Mistake, that they may see what vast difference there is betwixt the Duty of Passive Obedience and the false plea's for Active Assistances.

I shall end this by hinting a known Apologue, which seems to speak clearly common Sense, and Reason, and may help the apprehensions of some Men.

It is said, that a fierce wild Beast was caught in a snare, and there held till he was almost famished; a man passing by, the Beast beseeches him to unty, and loose his bonds, and set him at Liberty, and for that favour promises Amity, and perpetual Friendship: the man complies, and the Beast is freed. He must live by prey, and since he had no other to supply his necessities, he must prey upon *him*. The man pleads his merits, that he had saved the Beast's life, and therefore ought not to lose his own for it. The Beast alledges present Urgences and insuperable Necessities. Whilst they are high in this altercation, they are both cited to the Lyons Den, and the Fox is appointed to hear, and decide the Controversie betwixt them. Upon hearing, he finds there is much in the Mans Plea, and much in the Beasts, and would not positively determine against either. But that he might judge fairly, and equitably, at last he fix'd upon this Expedient. That all things should be put into the same state wherein they were before the Controversie began. Let the Beast, says he, be put into the snare again, and let the Man pass by him again, and if at the request of the Beast the Man think good to loose him again, let the Beast e'en devour him if he will.



F I N I S.

